

OVF NEWS



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October - December 2004
Karen Andersen, Editor

Saturday,
December 11th
Community Workday 9:00
Holiday Potluck 12:00
General Meeting, and...

THIRD ANNUAL ARTS & CRAFTS FUNDRAISER

after the Potluck under the Big Pine Tree

**DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING
AT OVF -- AND BENEFIT OVF!**

*Special Rose Pruning Workshop
Hands-on with expert Nina Rumley
Sunday, January 9 • Save the date!!*



CALLING ALL OVF ANGELS, ARTISTS AND COOKS!!

To celebrate the season and to raise money for 2005, we need your donations of hand-made holiday gifts, seedlings, and baked goods for the Arts & Crafts Fundraiser on Saturday, December 11th. To participate in this special event or for more information, please call Karen Andersen, OVF News Editor, at 310 838-8212.

Chair Shots

Note: coming up soon!

TILE DECORATING WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 9th, at 10:00 a.m.

OVF is undergoing a major sink renovation! Join us to handpaint ceramic tiles made and donated by Joan Klotz. Joan will glaze and fire them after you decorate them. Artistic talent NOT required. Great activity for the kids! To be held in the meeting area.

COMMON AREA RENOVATION

I would like to offer a very special thank you to store manager Haider Mirza and assistant store manager Clayton Moore from Sav-On Drugs located at 12315 Venice Blvd. in Mar Vista for offering Ocean View Farms a generous discount on the purchase of 36 new green plastic chairs for our meeting area. OVF has begun a lengthy project to rehab and renovate the common meeting area. Efforts have included: expanded storage space for the potluck supplies, refinishing and painting the buffet and dining tables, re-sealing the seating benches, adding electrical outlets behind the buffet table to be used for crock pots or hot plates, installing new speakers and a PA system for the general meetings and most recently adding these chairs. Anyone wishing to help or suggest additional improvements please contact me. I would also like to applaud garden members Kim & Shelby Jones for their enthusiastic and generous efforts and assistance.

EXPANSION

During the last 5 months, OVF has been working with the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) as well as the Hill Top Neighbor Association in an effort to expand the garden to add 56 plots in the vacant field north of Phase IV. A special thank you to Charles Singer and Joan Reitzel at RAP and Reynan Ledesma at DWP for their assistance in securing the necessary approval to proceed with this ambitious project. We'll be starting to clear the weeds and installing the plumbing and plot boundaries soon. Your help will be greatly appreciated. Please leave a note in my box if you wish to assist or need a few extra community hours. Most work will be done on Saturdays from late October through January 2005.

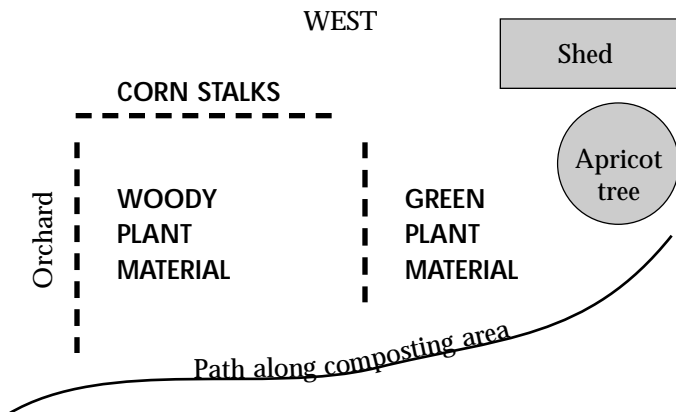
Have a great Fall gardening season.

Frank Harris

GardenMaster's Report

FALL PLANTING It is time to make preparations for your fall and winter crops. After removing the summer's plants it is advisable to add soil amendments (compost or manure) prior to planting your fall crops. Look at the "NK" planting guide posted on the bulletin board of the tool shed to determine which plants are best for our area.

COMPOST INFO Please take notice of the new signs and divider in the compost area. This is important in order to facilitate the shredding crew's tasks on Tuesday morning. Please take the time to separate your plant material and put the plant material into the proper area. This eliminates the need for the shredding crew to try to separate the green waste that we often find all tangled up in with the woody material. See sketch below:



Always move the material towards the front (west direction) as far as possible.



GOOD JOB Recently two of our members encountered an emergency situation when the water pipe standpipe (or vertical riser) broke off after the hose bib was operated in Ph-1L, Row C. The water main was gushing water into the air. Susan Dworski and Tyna Dycke were not aware of how to shut this off so they went to the tool shed and read the emergency instructions next to the telephone. They then returned back to Row C, removed the plastic cover over the Row C main valve and turned the red handle and shut the

water off. Everyone should take a few minutes to review this procedure and then find the valve that feeds your row and plot. Larry Bolan removed the 20 year old galvanized standpipe which had rusted completely in the area where the bib had been attached. Our plumbing at OVF is old and this type of incident is likely to occur again.

Ed Mosman, GardenMaster



CONGRATULATIONS TO WARREN AND HELEN MIYASHIRO

(plots D13 & D15) who celebrated 50 years of marriage on August 7th by renewing their vows at the St. Joan of Arc Church; followed by an evening of games, song, dance and storytelling "Hawaiian"-style. Warren's sage advice to everyone trying to reach their golden anniversary: "In order to make it to 50 years... you gotta be prepared to shovel a lot of manure."



WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN, BELIEVE IT, IT'S CLOSING TIME

Closing time for the main driveway (Centinela) gate, pedestrian gates and sheds is sundown. Sundown is defined as that time published in the Los Angeles Times every day. OVF members must cooperate with whomever is closing the gate by leaving immediately at sundown. The gate-closer has the authority to cite members for non cooperation. Gross incivility toward the gate-closer shall be grounds for dismissal. This rule is for ALL members not just those that have cars in the parking lot. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this important matter.

Garden Catalogs Bridge the Gap Between Seasons

by Melody Girard, Phase III, 57B

The dahlias are fading, the tomatoes succumbing to their inevitable late blight and the bean vines now yield no more than a meager garden snack. Summer is drawing to a close. While I will miss summer's bounty, I will find some consolation in the garden supply and seed catalogs—wish books—that will soon start filling my mailbox. Most companies now have websites allowing you to order securely online. Still, sitting in front of a computer can't replace the pleasure of curling up with the printed catalog and dreaming about the plants and supplies that will improve my garden.

MAIL ORDER VS. LOCAL NURSERIES

When buying from catalogs outside our region, you'll need to watch out for plants that won't do well in our climate. Avoid purchasing fruit and berry varieties that need more than 150 chill hours to produce. Descriptions for plants that are day-length sensitive, such as onions, should state that plants are "day-neutral" or "short-day" varieties.

WHY BOTHER WITH MAIL ORDER?

With the preparation required and the inconvenience of dealing with out-of-town vendors, why bother with mail order? The main reason is variety. For example, some mail order vendors stock more numerous varieties of heirloom or ethnic vegetable seeds. Catalogs often offer the best selections of specialty supplies, such as red selective reflecting mulch (the red plastic sheeting used under tomatoes) and bulk seeds for cover crops. Companies that focus on growing or stocking one category of plant, such as bulbs, roses or cacti, often produce fresher, higher quality stock, in more varieties, than the average garden center. Vendors committed to organic growing, such as **Peaceful Valley Farm Supply** (888-784-1722), carry larger selections of organic seeds, plant treatments and beneficial insect attractants than local stores.

TIPS FOR SHOPPING BY MAIL, PHONE OR INTERNET

Whatever you buy, a little advance homework can save you a big headache. Using these tips as reminders may lessen the likelihood of unsatisfactory mail, Internet or phone purchases.

- Avoid ordering live plants by mail, unless they're unavailable locally. If plants arrive in bad shape, call the company promptly to request replacements or refunds.
- Determine if the company bases postage charges on mailing weight or on your total purchase price.
- Read about the company's refund and return postage policies. Will they refund money for return shipping costs as well as for merchandise? Read any "limitation of remedy" statements.
- Search the **Garden Watchdog** database on the Internet at <http://davesgarden.com/gwd>.

- If possible, contact the **Better Business Bureau** in the company's state or town.
- Check cut-off dates for ordering and delivery, after which a plant may not be available or shipping time cannot be guaranteed. Weather, harvest size and holiday demand all affect plant availability and mailing schedules.
- If the company has your merchandise on backorder or on reserve, find out when they will charge items to your credit card. Will they hold off charging you until they're ready to fill your order?

RESEARCHING CATALOG COMPANIES

The most useful tool for unearthing information about mail order companies can be found at **Garden Watchdog** at **Dave's Garden** (<http://davesgarden.com/gwd>) on the Internet. Watchdog uses consumer reviews to rate mail order companies. You can search their database of 3,453 companies by name, category, key word, state or zip code. You can start by looking at **The Garden Watchdog list of Top 20 Companies**. Clicking on a company's name will take you to their address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail address and URL address. Check the list regularly for its updated ratings.

UNIQUE SUPPLIERS WORTHY OF NOTE

Pacific Coating Technologies sells red or silver selective reflective mulch (SRM) for \$10.50 (a good price) per 30 inches by 100 feet roll, plus 8.25% for state tax and \$5 for shipping. Silver deters insects, snails, fungus and mildew and increases color and yield. Call Joe Fossen in Solano Beach, 858-481-4896; fax 858-481-2824 and tell him that that you read about his products in this newsletter, and he'll sell it to you by the roll, instead of the case.

Seeds from Italy carries more than 300 varieties of traditional seeds; most of them packaged by a 200 year old Italian company. For about \$2.50 (\$3.50 organic) each, you'll get a huge seed packet containing 10 times the quantity of seeds found in most American seed packs. Their service is very fast—3 days from Winchester, MA to Santa Monica, CA! (791) 721-5904, fax (612) 435-4020 or via email (which they prefer) at seeds@growitalian.com.

The pleasure you'll derive from browsing the catalogs that arrive in your mailbox will make your research efforts worthwhile. With a little work, your garden can be productive throughout the year.

The Garden Watchdog Top 20 Catalogs

The Antique Rose Emporium
Baker's Creek Heirloom Seeds
Bluestone Perennials
Brent & Becky's Bulbs
Buried Treasures
Dune Lane Nursery
Edmunds' Roses
Forestfarm
Frostproof Growers
Gardeners Supply Company
Golden Harvest Organics
Hallson Gardens

J.L. Judson, Seedsman
Johnny's Select Seeds
Lee Valley Tools, Ltd.
Oakes Daylilies
Paradise Garden
Pinetree Garden Seeds
Select Seeds Antique Flowers
Territorial Seed Company

Table from Dave's Garden web site. For more information, <http://davesgarden.com/gwd>.

An OVF Garden Tea Party

There are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea
~ Henry James ~

By Karen Andersen, Ph IV, C6

To celebrate the end of summer, here in California there are still delightful afternoons to host an outdoor tea party. One of the little known benefits OVF provides our gardeners with is the production of compost tea. Warren Miyashiro, our compost host, has devised a system utilizing a reservoir underneath the middle compost pile near the big pine tree, which produces compost tea. You'll need to bring your own [teapot or] bucket to collect the tea in and then if you'd like you can dilute it with water and put some in a spray bottle. For best results, use the tea soon after making it since aerobic microbes will die within 12 hours without the benefit of aeration and a food source. The tea should smell sweet and earthy because if it has a foul odor, then it may contain harmful microbes, which your plants and your party guests won't enjoy.

The tea is either sprayed onto the leaves or poured over your soil. If your soil is in great condition, dilute the tea with one part tea to 10 parts water otherwise it is not necessary to dilute the tea. As an experiment, apply it once or twice a month and observe the reaction that occurs in your garden. The tea helps increase the amount of nutrients available to plants and also accelerates the breakdown of toxins in the soil. Another benefit occurs after spraying the plant's leaves with the compost tea, which helps suppress leaf diseases. The tea coats plants with a dense and diverse population of beneficial bacteria, fungi, protozoa and nematodes and has been shown to raise the nutritional quality and improve the flavor of vegetables.

The traditional method of creating compost tea uses water to remove nutrients from

the compost. This technique can be traced as far back as 4,000 years ago in ancient Egypt when the compost was placed into a burlap bag while surrounded with water and occasionally the mixture was stirred together. Brewing your own compost tea has become more popular and there are several devices you can order, or if you're Martha Stewart, perhaps you could brew the tea yourself moments before your party guests breathlessly arrive. The tea set usually includes a brewing container, a pump to circulate and oxygenate the water (very important) and a supply of nutrients. Companies like Earth Tea Brewer, Hendrikus Schraven Organic, Earthworks and Alaska Giant are among the best. Alaska Giant sells a 1 and 5 gallon brewer while Hendrikus makes much larger brewers.

For more info on the web, go to www.hendrikusorganics.com, www.composttea.com, www.alaskagiant.com, or www.soilfirst.com. A company called Soil Foodweb will test your compost tea to determine its composition (www.soilfoodweb.com/phpweb). "Only recently," says Elaine Ingham, founder and director of Soil Foodweb Inc., "have we understood that aerobic was key. All our plant trials using quality aerobically produced organic tea have shown good suppression of diseases."

I was surprised to learn that some vineyards all over the world have recently begun using compost teas because the tea has proven effective in reducing common vine diseases such as powdery mildew and botrytis. The tea also improved overall vine and soil health resulting in improved fruit quality. The city of San Francisco began spraying compost tea a few years ago on their municipal golf courses to further reduce use of chemical pesticides and fungicides. And now arrives the end of our garden tea party. Seems like a perfect time to tee off!

OCTOBER-DECEMBER WORKDAY SCHEDULE

OCTOBER

9 Sat 9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 Gen. Mtg.
31 Sun 1-4 Work

NOVEMBER

13 Sat 9-12 Work
20 Sat 9:30 Board Mtg.
28 Sun 1-4 Work

DECEMBER

11 Sat 9-12 Work
12 Potluck
1 Gen. Mtg.
2 Crafts Fair.
26 Sun 1-4 Work

LAST CHANCE TO GET IN YOUR HOURS

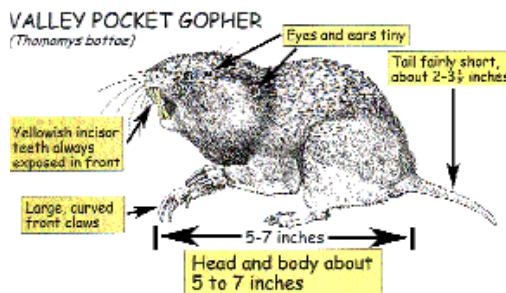
BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Help beautify OVF. Earn community hours if unable to attend weekend workdays. Leave note in Chair mailbox or frank@oceanviewfarms.net.

OVF DOCENT

Docent to conduct tours of OVF for school-age children on as needed basis. Ideal for retiree or gardener with flexible schedule. Leave note in Chair mailbox or frank@oceanviewfarms.net.

Got one? No worries. Call OVF's GopherBusters.



OVF's new, crack Gopher ERAD Team is standing by to aid squeamish gardeners in trapping these ubiquitous pests. Leave a note in the Gardenmaster's box with your plot number and pertinent information and relax... GopherBusters will do the rest!